

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAN SA 04475 01 OF 02 302253Z

63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 DODE-00 L-02 IO-03

PRS-01 OMB-01 SSO-00 SPC-01 DRC-01 /058 W

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O 302155Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4233

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE NIACT

USCINCSO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 4475

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS CATEGORY 1

SUBJ: EL SALVADOR/HONDURAS PROBLEM

REF: A. STATE 233087, B. SAN SALVADOR 4420

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: IN MID-DAY CONVERSATION WITH ME NOV. 29, PRES MOLINA REVEALED THAT REVIVED HONDURAN CLAIMS TO TWO SALVADORAN BORDER AREAS AND MEANGUERA ISLAND DURING LAST WEEKEND NEGOTIATIONS IN MEXICO MERELY HASTENED PRONOUNCEMENT OF DECISION HE HAD REACHED TWO WEEKS EARLIER TO DENOUNCE PACT OF BOGOTA: WHILE SUBSTANTIVE BOUNDARY ISSUE WHICH PRODUCED THE CONTRETEMPS STILL REMAINS UNRESOLVED, THE NEGOTIATORS HAD RESUMED THEIR EFFORTS WITH DISCUSSIONS PROCEEDING DURING LAST TWO DAYS. IF HONDURAS REFRAINS FROM MAKING RENEWED CLAIMS TO TERRITORY HE CONSIDERS TO BE CLEARLY SALVADORAN, HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEE NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAN SA 04475 01 OF 02 302253Z

AS SCHEDULED BY DEC. 15. HOWEVER, IF HONDURAS PROVES TO BE

UNRELENTING, PARTICULARLY AFTER GOES DENUNCIATION OF PACT OF BOGOTA, HE IS WILLING TO STRIVE FOR COMPROMISE BUT SEES THIS AS UNLIKELY AND UNACCEPTABLE PRIOR TO MARCH 1974 CONGRESSIONAL-MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THEREFORE, IF NEED BE, HE IS AGREEABLE TO SUSPENSION OF NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL APRIL. HE EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT HE AND PRES LOPEZ ARELLANO ARE MUTUALLY COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING A JUST SETTLEMENT AND FIRMLY AGREED THAT A RENEWED ARMED CONFRONTATION MUST NOT OCCUR. HE CLEARLY RECOGNIZES NEED TO AVOID ACTIONS, PARTICULARLY MILITARY DECISIONS, WHICH MIGHT INCREASE TENSIONS OR EXACERBATE PROBLEMS WITH HONDURAS; AND AGREES TO ASSURE CONTINUING DIRECT LIAISON BETWEEN SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN MILITARY FORCES AT BOTH GENERAL STAFF AND LOCAL LEVELS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT MY INITIATIVE, PRES MOLINA RECEIVED ME AND USMILGP COMMANDER AT MIDDAY NOVEMBER 29, AND IN LENGTHY, RELAXED CONVERSATION TALKED ABOUT SALVADORAN-HONDURAN PROBLEM. HE REVEALED THAT SOME WEEKS AGO, HE HAD ORDERED DISTINGUISHED, BROADLY-BASED COMMISSION OF JURISTS TO STUDY NAGGING PROBLEM OF SALVADOR'S UNCONDITIONAL ADHERANCE TO PACT OF BOGOTA WITHIN CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH HONDURAS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO HIM. COMMISSION HAD RECOMMENDED DENUNCIATION, ARGUING THAT PACT IS IN CONFLICT WITH CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS BARRING TERRITORIAL REDUCTIONS AND FACT THAT LESS THAN HALF OF SIGNATURES HAD RATIFIED AND MOST OF THESE WITH RESERVATIONS. SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE LAST WEEKEND'S NEGOTIATING CONTRETEMPS, HE HAD ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATION AND REACHED DECISION TO DENOUNCE, BUT WAS UNDECIDED ON TIMING. THE HONDURAN NEGOTIATOR'S REVIVAL LAST WEEKEND OF CLAIMS TO ZAZALAPA AND MONTECA BORDER POCKETS AND MEANGUERA ISLAND, ALL OF WHICH HE CONSIDERS TO BE UNDISPUTABLY SALVADORAN, MOVED HIM INTO DENUNCIATION ACTION AND PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENT TWO DAYS LATER LAST MONDAY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT, EVEN WITHOUT REVIVED HONDURAN CLAIMS, HE WOULD HAVE EVENTUALLY GONE AHEAD WITH DENUNCIATION TO EXTRICATE EL SALVADOR FROM AWKWARD CONSTITUTIONAL TERRITORIAL PREDICAMENT. FOREGOING ALSO APPLIES TO SALVADOR'S ACCEPTANCE OF ICJ PROCEDURES AND JURISDICTION. HE CLARIFIED THAT IT WAS MUCH MORE HONDURAS' VIGOROUS REVIVAL OF MORE EXTENSIVE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

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PAGE 03 SAN SA 04475 01 OF 02 302253Z

WHICH HAD SPURRED HIS ACTION RATHER THAN BATRES INSISTANCE ON INCLUSION OF LANGUAGE IMPLYING ACCEPTANCE OF ARBITRATION.

3. MOLINA ALSO CONFIRMED THAT, AT NOV. 16 JALAPA SUMMIT MEETING, BATRES HAD FIERCELY OPPOSED FORMULA OF BILATERAL MIXED MILITARY BOUNDARY COMMISSION BUT CLAIMED THAT ULTIMATELY GEN LOPEZ ARELLANO HAD OVER-RULED BATRES AND HAD CLEARLY AGREED TO THIS FORMULA AS WITNESSED BY GENERALS SOMOZA AND ARANA.

UNDER IT, THE NEGOTIATIONS IN MEXICO WERE TO DRAFT A LANGUAGE PROVIDING FOR SETTING UP OF MIXED MILITARY COMMISSION (WITH MINIMUM OF CIVILIAN ADVISERS-CARTOGRAPHER, GEOGRAPHER, LAWYER, HISTORIAN) TO SURVEY DISPUTED PARTS OF LAND BOUNDARY AND AGREE TO DEMARCATION. ANY UNAGREED SECTORS WOULD BE REFERRED TO TWO CHIEFS OF STATE FOR RESOLUTION WITH MEDIATORY ASSISTANCE OF NEIGHBORING CHIEFS OF STATE, IF NECESSARY.

4. MOLINA SAID THAT, AFTER JALAPA, HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT NEGOTIATIONS IN MEXICO COULD BE SATISFACTORILY CONCLUDED BY DECEMBER 15 DEADLINE. WHILE HE PREFERRED FOREGOING TIMETABLE, AND IT WAS STILL POSSIBLE OF ACHIEVEMENT IF HONDURAS REFRAINED FROM REVIVING UNREASONABLE TERRITORIAL DEMANDS, THIS DID NOT SEEM LIKELY, PARTICULARLY AFTER LAST WEEKEND'S DEVELOPMENTS CULMINATING IN DENOUNCEMENT OF BOGOTA PACT. MOLINA PROFESSED INTEREST IN HAMMERING-OUT A COMPROMISE BOUNDARY DISPUTE SETTLEMENT; BUT THOUGHT THIS WOULD REQUIRE AN AGREEMENT TO EXTEND THE NEGOTIATING PERIOD FOR SEVERAL MORE MONTHS, PERHAPS SUSPENDING TALKS UNTIL APRIL 1974. HE ADMITTED THAT ANY COMPROMISE MEANT MUTUAL CONCESSIONS AND THAT IT WOULD BE WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIS ADMINISTRATION TO GO INTO THE MARCH 1974 CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN TRYING TO SELL TO THE VOTERS A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT REFLECTING SALVADORAN CONCESSIONS. SUCH AN AGREEMENT COULD NOT BE PUBLICIZED NOR PUT TO THE COUNTRY UNTIL AFTER THESE ELECTIONS.

5. MOLINA ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NOT FOREWARNED LOPEZ ARELLANO ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS REGARDING PACT OF BOGOTA AND ICJ, BUT CONTENDED THAT SALVADOR'S FIRM OPPOSITION TO ARBITRATION OR ADJUDICATION WAS LONG AND WELL KNOWN TO HONDURAS AND THAT ITS ACTION SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISING TO THE GOH. HE RECOGNIZED THAT IT CREATED A SITUATION TO WHICH SOME

SECRET

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PAGE 04 SAN SA 04475 01 OF 02 302253Z

RESPONSE FROM THE GOH WAS TO BE EXPECTED, BUT HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT LOPEZ ARELLANO'S FIRM COMMITMENT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WOULD CAUSE HIM TO BE REASONABLE AND RESTRAINED IN HIS REACTIONS.

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 04475 02 OF 02 010325Z

62/63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PM-03 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 DODE-00 L-02 IO-03

PRS-01 OMB-01 SSO-00 SPC-01 DRC-01 /058 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

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USCINCSO

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 4475

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- TEXT --

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY PUZZLEMENT OVER SALVADOR'S PRECAUTIONARY MILITARY ALERT EARLIER THIS WEEK, MOLINA EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD MERELY REACTED TO REPORTS OF HONDURAN TROOPS MOVEMENTS IN A SITUATION OF INCREASED EXPECTANCY FOLLOWING PUBLICIZING OF BOGOTA PACT DENOUNCEMENT. HE READILY ADMITTED THAT SALVADORAN INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES WERE WOEFULLY INADEQUATE AND THAT THERE WAS A TENDENCY TO OVER-REACTION BY HIS MILITARY ABOUT REPORTS-NO MATTER HOW VAGUE-ABOUT HONDURAN MILITARY ACTIONS AND INTENTIONS. HE CONSTANTLY ADMONISHED HIS INTELLIGENCE PEOPLE TO SIFT CAREFULLY AND NOT CARELESSLY SEND IN UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS OR ALARMIST RUMORS; BUT HIS EFFORTS ARE TO LITTLE AVAIL. CONSEQUENTLY, HE HAS TO LIVE WITH THESE FACTS OF LIFE AND CANNOT AFFORD TO APPEAR TO HIS OWN MILITARY TO BE DISDAINFUL OF THREATS OF SECURITY. IN THIS CASE, HE COULD NOT HELP DOING THE MINIMUM REINFORCEMENT OF A FEW NATIONAL GUARD POSTS, EMLACEMENT OF A FEW ANTIQUATED ANTI-AIRCRAFT

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PAGE 02 SAN SA 04475 02 OF 02 010325Z

BATTERIES, STRICT ORDERS TO BORDER UNITS TO STA WELL AWAY FROM THE BORDER IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR DUTY, ABSOLUTELY NO MOVEMENT OF MILITARY UNITS WITHOUT HIS ORDERS.

7. LAST MONDAY HE HAD INFORMED GEN. SOMOZA, HIS LIAISON WITH LOPEZ ARELLANO, OF THE FOREGOING PRECAUTIONS. IN

SOMOZAS ABSENCE, HE WOULD UTILIZE THE LATTERS INTELLIGENCE CHIEF, GEN. GENIE, TO CONDUCT THE LIAISON, AS NECESSARY, WITH LOPEZ. (MOLINA ASSERTED THAT HE WAS VERY WILLING TO ESTABLISH A DIRECT LIAISON WITH LOPEZ BUT THAT THE LATTER WOULD PROBABLY CONSIDER SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AS POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE.)

8. AS TO DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN ARMED FORCES, MOLINA ASSURED ME THAT HE IS FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE NEED AND VALUE OF MAINTAINING THEM. HE KNEW THAT SUCH COMMUNICATIONS WERE IN EFFECT BETWEEN THE GENERAL STAFFS AND SAID HE WOULD CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BORDER ELEMENTS ARE MAINTAINED AS WELL.

9. MOLINA REPEATEDLY STRESSED THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION THAT, WITH THE HELP OF PRES ARANA AND GENERAL SOMOZA, HE HAD ESTABLISHED A RELATIONSHIP OF SOME CONFIDENCE AND MUTUAL TRUST WITH LOPEZ ARELLANO. (FIGUERES HAD OFFERED HELP BUT WAS GEOGRAPHICALLY TOO REMOTE AND DIDN'T FIT IN WELL WITH THE MILITARY). U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S UNFORTUNATE LEAK ABOUT GOES PROCUREMENT OF ISRAELI AIRCRAFT HAD AROUSED SUSPICIONS AND JEOPARDIZED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH LOPEZ, BUT THE LAST TWO PRESIDENTIAL MEETINGS ESPOUSED BY ARANA AND SOMOZA HAD SERVED THE PURPOSE OF RESTORING CONFIDENCE AND TRUST. MOLINA BELIEVED THAT LOPEZ WAS AS CONVINCED AS HE WAS OF THE NEED TO ACHIEVE A JUST SETTLEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID BOTH OF THEM HAVE A CLEAR AND FIRM UNDERSTANDING THAT A RENEWED ARMED CONFRONTATION MUST NOT OCCUR. FOR HIS OWN PART, HE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS, PARTICULARLY MILITARY DECISIONS WHICH MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO MISINTERPRETATION BY HONDURAS OR WHICH COULD EXACERBATE THE PROBLEMS WITH THAT COUNTRY. HE ALSO WAS AWARE OF THE PROBLEM OF SENSITIVITY OF THE POPULATIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES AND THE INTENSE RUMOR MONGERING TO WHICH THEY ARE BOTH PRONE AND WHICH EASILY

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SECRET

PAGE 03 SAN SA 04475 02 OF 02 010325Z

AROUSE PASSIONS AND TENSIONS.
MOSKOWITZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 30 NOV 1973
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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